## Families Making the Connection

### Sodium and School Meals

Eating a diet high in sodium is linked to high blood pressure. Reducing dietary sodium may lower blood pressure, which reduces the risk of heart disease, stroke and kidney disease. As part of the Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act, schools are reducing sodium in school meals. In 2014-15, schools are required to meet the following weekly sodium targets for meals:

| Grade | Lunch | Breakfast |
|---|---|---|
| K-5 | ≤1,230mg | ≤540mg |
| 6-8 | ≤1,360mg | ≤600mg |
| 9-12 | ≤1,420mg | ≤640mg |

A teaspoon of salt has about 2,300 mg of sodium. Choosing foods that are lower in salt (sodium) can support healthy eating. Families can take steps to reduce salt or sodium:

- *Focus on fresh foods*. Fresh fruits and vegetables, meats, poultry and fish along with dry beans, eggs, milk, yogurt and grains, like rice, are naturally low in sodium.
- *Eat less processed foods*. Cured meats (bacon, sausage, hot dogs, lunch meats), canned foods, and frozen foods (pizza, nuggets, corn dogs) are higher in sodium.
- *Cook more often at home*. Use little or no salt when cooking. Rinse and drain canned vegetables. Skip salt at the table.
- *Try new flavors*. Use herbs and spices, other than salt, to season food.
- *Read food labels* - ingredients and the Nutrition Facts Panel. Look for "low sodium", "reduced sodium", or "no salt added".
- *Use caution with condiments* (soy sauce, ketchup, salad dressing, pickles, olives, etc.).

## January

- Family Fit Lifestyle Month
- Salt Awareness Week (January 26-30)

Sources: www.fns.usda.gov, www.eatright.org

| | | | Thursday, January 1 | Friday, January 2 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Monday, January 5 | Tuesday, January 6 | Wednesday, January 7 | Thursday, January 8 | Friday, January 9 |
| Monday, January 12 | Tuesday, January 13 | Wednesday, January 14 | Thursday, January 15 | Friday, January16 |
| Monday, January 19 | Tuesday, January 20 | Wednesday, January 21 | Thursday, January 22 | Friday, January 23 |
| Monday, January 26 | Tuesday, January 27 | Wednesday, January 28 | Thursday, January 29 | Friday, January 30 |